

# Police Fact Sheet



## WHAT DO POLICE DO?

Police officers, law enforcement officers, security officers and people in related positions may be called to any number of work environments, and perform a variety of tasks.

The main duties of a police officer, among others, are to:

- Respond to emergency calls such as crimes, accidents/incidents/collisions, fire, violent situations, and natural disasters.
- Patrol assigned areas to maintain public safety.
- Enforce laws and regulations.
- Control traffic during emergencies, road work, etc.
- Investigate crimes and incidents.
- Perform first aid.
- Educate the public on crime prevention and safety.

## What are some health and safety issues for police?

Police work is among the most dangerous and requires special training. The hazards of police work include:

- Violent attacks.
- Standing or sitting for long hours.
- Exposure to contagious and infectious diseases from people, animals, needles, and other sources.
- Exposure to various chemical or biological hazards.
- Exposure to opioids or other substances.
- Pain from physical overexertion and prolonged or awkward body postures.
- Exposure to extreme working conditions, extreme temperatures and UV radiation.
- Noise.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Fatigue from shift work.
- Psychological stress or trauma.
- Working alone.
- Risk of injury from the various locations where police may be called to: fire, explosion, unstable structures and surfaces, falling objects; or working at heights or near traffic, water, confined spaces, large crowds, violent situations, etc.
- Danger of driving at high speeds, often in difficult traffic or weather conditions.

- Workplace violence or harassment, and harassment from the public.

### **What are some preventive measures for police?**

- Have extensive safety and skills training.
- Exercise regularly to keep fit and reduce the risk of injury.
- Wash your hands frequently and follow other protective hygiene measures to reduce the chance of infection.
- Use personal protective equipment or other barriers for the task.
- Follow precautions for first responders when opioids or related substances are suspected.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and on the alert for dangerous people or situations.
- Take breaks, as appropriate, from awkward positions or repetitive physical tasks.
- Follow a recommended shift work pattern and protect yourself from the hazards associated with shift work.
- Follow or establish safety procedures for working alone, or for avoiding working alone wherever possible.
- Learn about stress and post-traumatic stress, and consider a debriefing session or counselling after a critical or traumatic event.
- Have first aid training.

Learn and follow company violence and harassment prevention policy and procedures.

### **What are some good general safe work practices?**

Ensure that you are trained and informed on how to avoid the various health and safety hazards of your job. Read about these:

- Chemical hazards and WHMIS.
- Blood borne diseases.
- The importance of hand washing and good hygiene practices.
- Needlestick injuries.
- Proper selection, use, maintenance and storage of personal protective equipment.
- Safe lifting techniques.
- Preventing slips, trips and falls.
- Shift work.
- Working alone.
- Fire safety.
- Fall protection.
- Safe driving.
- First Aid.
- Violence and harassment.

Always:

- Follow the established safety procedures for your profession.
- Know how to report a hazard.
- Follow good housekeeping procedures.

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